

Memorandum

To: Massachusetts Pediatric Care Providers
From: Susan M. Lett, MD, MPH
Re: Influenza Vaccination of School-Aged Children In Massachusetts
Date: September 2008

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) now recommends influenza vaccination of all school aged children through 18 years of age for the following reasons:

- **Disease Burden.** Children have the highest attack rates of influenza and experience substantial impacts, including medical visits, antibiotic use and school absenteeism.
- **Public Health Impact.** Studies have shown that influenza vaccination of this age group reduces circulation of influenza in the community; reduces influenza-like illness and medical visits among household contacts of vaccinated school age-children; and reduces rates of parental work loss to care for sick children.

This recommendation was made in 2008, for initial official implementation in 2009. Federal and state funding will not be sufficient to vaccinate the approximately 1 million children in Massachusetts who are included under this recommendation. Strategies to effectively implement this program must include increased private purchase of influenza vaccine and first dollar coverage of vaccination in all settings.

Achieving and sustaining annual influenza vaccination of school-aged children will take a number of years, and will require commitment and close collaboration among many partners, including:

- Parents
- Pediatric health care providers
- Public and private insurers
- School nurses and administrators
- Local health departments and school committees
- Community vaccinators
- Massachusetts Departments of Public Health and Education
- Civic organizations and the volunteer Medcial Reserve Corps

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health will continue to work with our many partners to implement this program and ensure that all children in Massachusetts enjoy the protection afforded by vaccination.

If you have any questions about this initiative or need technical assistance, please call 617-983-6800 and ask to speak with an MDPH immunization epidemiologist.

"It takes a village to vaccinate a child."